

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 0733

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SUBJ: SHAH ON DEFENSE ISSUES

1. JANUARY 25 TEHRAN JOURNAL AND FARSI PAPERS GAVE PROMINENT PLAY TO SHAH'S RECENT INTERVIEW WITH NBC WITH HEADLINES "MONARCH WARNS U.S. ON ARMS EMBARGO." SHAH TOLD REPORTER THAT IF U.S. IMPOSED RESTRICTIONS ON ARMS SALES TO IRAN, IT WOULD MAKE PURCHASES ELSEWHERE. "WE ARE NOT BUYING ARMS TO PLEASE THIS COUNTRY OR THAT, BUT BECAUSE THE AIM BEHIND OUR ARMS PURCHASES IS TO MEET OUR OWN DEFENSE NEEDS." EDITORIALS HAVE ECHOED THIS THEME AND IRANIAN CONFIDENCE THAT ABILITY TO PAY CASH WOULD MAKE IT EASY TO FIND NECESSARY ARMS SHOULD U.S. IMPOSE RESTRICTIONS.

2. IN INTERVIEW JANUARY 23 WITH JOHN COOLEY OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, SHAH DESCRIBED IRAN'S SHORTFALL IN OIL REVENUES AND OUTLINED IMPACT ON IRANIAN FOREIGN POLICY ALONG LINES PREVIOUSLY STATED PRIVATELY. THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER AID COMMITMENTS, HE SAID, AND IRAN WOULD LIMIT DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ARMED FORCES TO ROLE OF DEFENDING NATIONAL TERRITORY. IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PROJECT IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, AND U.S. AND WESTERN COUNTRIES WOULD HAVE TO CARRY FULL
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BURDEN OF SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS THERE. DEPENDING ON FINANCES,

DEVELOPMENT OF CHAH BAHAR NAVAL BASE MIGHT BE AFFECTED.

3. SHAH GAVE FURTHER BACKGROUND FOR HIS PREOCCUPATION WITH SECURITY MATTERS IN AUDIENCE GRANTED DR. WILLIAM GRIFFITH OF MIT JANUARY 23. SHAH WAS VERY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE AND THOUGH CONFLICT MIGHT BREAK OUT AGAIN SOON. HE COMPLAINED OF ISRAELI STUBBORNESS IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. HE ALSO THOUGH ARAB COUNTRIES SUCH AS JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA, \$3.605-\$7.049?)3. -5 #9.3 5#-5 5#384)3-\$34 .8 ?E OVERTHROWN. SHAH EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT LEBANON AND ANGOLA, COMMENTING THAT COMMUNISTS WERE PROFITING FROM CHAOS IN BOTH PLACES. GIVEN THESE VARIOUS UNSETTLED SITUATIONS, SHAH SAW IT AS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEFORE THAT HIS COUNTRY CONTINUE TO BUY ARMS WITH WHICH TO DEFEND ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS. SHAH SAID HE WAS WORRIED ABOUT CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS BECAUSE OF MEMBERS' LACK OF APPRECIATION FOR SERIOUSNESS OF COMMUNIST THREAT IN PLACES SUCH AS ANGOLA.

4. DURING COOLEY INTERVIEW, SHAH EMPHATICALLY DECLARED THAT HE EXPECTED GRUMMAN AND NORTHROP TO REPAY TO GOI MONEY COMPANIES HAD PAID OR PROMISED TO AGENTS. HE INDICATED THAT IRANIAN INFORMATION WAS QUITE CLEAR ON DEALS COMPANIES HAD MADE WITH AGENTS AND THERE WAS LITTLE ROOM FOR DEBATE ON THIS MATTER.

5. UNDERSTAND THAT COOLEY'S ARTICLES WILL PROBABLY APPEAR ON JANUARY 26 AND 27. GRIFFITH IS PREPARING CHAPTER FOR BOOK EDITED BY LENCZOWSKI TO APPEAR LATER THIS YEAR.
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